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T H E

AMERICAN NATURALIST.

Vol. III.—APRIL, 1869.—No. 2.



THE ABORIGINAL MOUND BUILDERS OF TENNESSEE.

BY DR. JOSEPH JONES.



WHEN the first Anglo-American pioneers, about the middle of the last century, explored the country east and north of the Tennessee River, the territory between the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers was a vast unoccupied wilderness. The rich valleys, hills and plains of Tennessee and Kentucky were crowded with a dense growth of forest trees and canes, and formed an extensive park, held permanently only by the beasts of the forest, and abounding with immense herds of buffalo, flocks of wild turkeys, droves of deer and innumerable bears. The nearest permanent Indian settlements were on the Sciota and Miami on the north, and on the waters of the Little Tennessee on the south; and from these points the warriors of the Miami Confederacy of the north, and the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Cherokees of the south issued to engage in hunting and war, in this great central theatre. At this period, by common agreement of all the surrounding tribes, this section of country, which, for its fertile soil, numerous rivers and abundant supply of fish and game, was admirably adapted to the settlement of savage tribes, appeared to have been reserved from permanent occupancy.

That this country, in common with other portions of the

great Valley of the Mississippi, was inhabited in ancient times by a comparatively dense population, who subsisted by the arts of husbandry, as well as by the chase, is evident from the numerous depositories of the dead in the caves and along the banks of the streams in the fertile valleys, and around the cool springs which abound in this limestone region, and from the imposing monumental remains and extensive earthworks.

A considerable portion of the city of Nashville has been built over an extensive Indian graveyard,* which lay along the valley of Lick Branch. A large portion of these graves have been removed in the building of North Nashville. In this section of the city I saw a number of these stone graves, exposed during the digging of the cellars of a row of houses, and obtained a small stone hatchet, and another implement of hard, silicious stone, beautifully polished. This stone implement is supposed to have been used in the dressing of hides. All around the sulphur spring, traces of the aborigines are manifest in the form of fragments of large pots and various implements. It is supposed that this salt lick was frequented by the Indians for game and the manufacture of salt.

Extensive fortifications, several miles in extent, enclosing two systems of mounds and numerous stone graves, lie along the Big Harpeth, about sixteen miles below Old Town, at

* An extensive burying ground lies on the opposite bank of the Cumberland, directly across from the mouth of Lick Branch, and another about one and a half miles lower down; another at Cockrill's Spring, two and a half miles from the Sulphur Spring; another six miles from Nashville on the Charlotte Pike, and still another at Hayesborough. Numerous stone graves are also found on White's Creek, on the Dickerson Pike, nine miles from Nashville, and at Sycamore, twenty-two miles from Nashville, on the plantation of Colonel Overton, and in and around Brentwood, at the Boiling Springs, and on the plantation of Mr. Scales. Extensive Indian burying grounds are also found in White County, near Sparta, and along the various streams flowing into the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers, as Harpeth, Duck, Elk and Stone Rivers. At the plantation of General DeGraffenreid, two and a half miles above Franklin, numerous stone graves are found within an extensive earthwork, which appears to have surrounded a considerable Indian town. One large square mound, 230 feet in diameter, together with a chain of smaller ones, are found within the ancient fortification, with mounds and stone graves. One of the most remarkable stone-grave burying grounds is found on the west fork of Big Harpeth, six and a half miles from Franklin, at a place called Old Town, the property of Mr. Thomas Brown.

Mound Bottom and Osborn's Place. At these extensive fortifications, which enclose the sites of two ancient cities, are found three pyramidal mounds, about fifty feet in elevation, and each one containing an acre upon its summit, and besides these, numerous lesser mounds. Such structures must have required the labor of a considerable population for a series of years; and more especially must the erection of these earth pyramids have been slow and tedious, as the aborigines were without horses or carts, and the immense mass of earth must have been carried by hand in baskets and skins. The old road or trail which connected these two ancient cities can still be discerned in the forest, the well-worn way being in some places a foot or more beneath the general surface. It is evident from these facts that a chain of fortified towns extended in ancient days all along Big Harpeth, and from careful excavations and examinations and comparisons of the crania and relics, we are convinced that they were all erected by the same race. One of the most remarkable aboriginal remains in Tennessee is found in the fork of Duck River, near Manchester, and is known as the *Stone Fort*. The walls of the fort have been formed of loose rocks and stones gathered from the bed of the river. The gateway of the fort, which opens toward the neck of land between the two branches of the river, is carefully protected by an inner line of works, so constructed that the enemy entering the fort would be received in a blind pouch or bag. Directly in front of the gateway of the fort, and about half a mile distant, stands a remarkable mound, the structure of which is similar to that of the walls of the fort, being composed of rocks, none of which exceed a foot and a half in diameter. This oblong mound is 600 feet in circumference and forty feet in height, and the labor of collecting and depositing the loose rocks by hand must have been considerable.

It would be impossible for us upon the present occasion to enter into a minute description of the mounds of Tennessee.

They are found upon the Cumberland, Little Tennessee, Big Tennessee, French Broad, Elk River, Harpeth, Duck and Stone Rivers. As a general rule these mounds are erected upon rich alluvial bottoms, and are either surrounded by extensive earthworks, or are located in the neighborhood of these fortifications, which mark the site of towns. The mounds vary in number and size, in a measure, with the extent and richness of the valleys and the size of the earthworks. The smallest are not more than a few feet in height, and about thirty feet in diameter, while the largest attain a height of seventy feet, and cover an acre or two of ground. Many of the smaller mounds were used for the burial of the dead, others for the purpose of religious sacrifice and for the burning of the dead, while the largest pyramidal mounds were most probably the sites of the temples and council-houses of the aborigines.

The ancient inhabitants of Tennessee also left singular paintings upon the rocks, representing the sun and moon. These paintings occupy the face of perpendicular cliffs on the Harpeth, Tennessee, French Broad, Duck and Cumberland Rivers. The paintings are executed with red ochre, upon high, inaccessible walls of rock overhanging the water, and were, without doubt, devoted to sacred purposes, and were emblematic of the sun, the god of the aborigines. The paintings of the sun on the rocks on Big Harpeth River, about three miles below the road which crosses this stream from Nashville to Charlotte, can be seen for a distance of four miles, and it is probable that the worshippers of the sun assembled before this high place for the performance of their sacred rights. At Buffalo Gap, on the same stream, where the ancient trail of the buffalo is still distinct, a line of buffaloes is painted upon the cliff rock which overhangs from above, and is capable of sheltering a thousand men.

We have still another evidence of the existence of a numerous population, in the fact that the first settlers found the caves filled with human skeletons.

Haywood relates that in the spring of the year 1811, two human beings were found in a copperas cave, in Warren County, in West Tennessee, about fifteen miles south-west from Sparta, and twenty miles from McMinnville. One of these persons was a male, the other a female. They were interred in baskets made of cane, curiously wrought, and evidencing great mechanical skill. They were both dislocated at the hip joint, and were placed erect in the baskets, with a covering of cane made to fit the baskets in which they were placed. The flesh of these persons was entire and undecayed, of a brown color, produced by time, the flesh having adhered to the bones and sinews. Around the female, next her body, was placed a well dressed doeskin; next to this was placed a rug, very curiously wrought of the bark of a tree and feathers. The bark seemed to have been formed of small strands well twisted. Around each of these strands feathers were rolled, and the whole woven into cloth of a fine texture, after the manner of our common coarse fabrics. This rug was about three feet wide, and between six and seven feet in length. The whole of the ligaments thus formed of bark were completely covered by the feathers, forming a body of about one-eighth of an inch in thickness, the feathers extending about one-quarter of an inch in length from the strand to which they were confined. Its appearance was highly diversified by green, blue, yellow and black, presenting different shades of color when reflected upon by the light in different positions. The next covering was an undressed deer-skin, around which was rolled in good order a plain shroud manufactured after the same order as the one ornamented with feathers. This article resembled very much in its texture the bags generally used for the purpose of holding coffee, exported from Havana to the United States. The female had in her hand a fan formed of the tail feathers of a turkey, curiously bound with buckskin strings and scarlet colored hair, so as to open and shut readily. The hair of these mummies was still remaining upon their heads, and

was of a yellow caste and very fine texture. De Soto, in his march in 1539 and 1540, saw great numbers of similar feathered mantles; the Mexicans at the time of the Spanish conquest were clad in similar garments.

The tribes of Indians inhabiting the immense territory called by the Spaniards, Florida, embracing a country of indefinite extent, bordering upon the Gulf of Mexico, and including a large portion of the Valley of the Mississippi, and the present States of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and the middle and western portions of Tennessee, were more highly civilized, and farther advanced than those in more northern regions; they were worshippers of the sun, were governed by despotic princes, cultivated the soil, had made some advances in the arts, and their manners, customs and religion all pointed to Mexico as their native country.

The population was much greater at the time of the invasion of De Soto than it has been at any subsequent period. Large armies were frequently arrayed against him. In Potosa, Florida, he was furnished with seven hundred burden bearers. In Ocute, Georgia, he was supplied with two hundred of these Indian servants, and at Cafeque, in the same State, four thousand more transported the effects of his army. A numerous population was found in the province of Coofa, and large forces opposed him at Maubila, Chickasa, and Alabama. The invasion of De Soto resulted in the destruction of an immense Indian population in all the territory through which he passed; they were not only destroyed in the bloody battles by thousands, but they were worn out by heavy burdens, and hunted down with bloodhounds. The European diseases, which the natives inherited from the Spaniards, served also to thin out their population. Again, the constant bloody wars in which they were afterwards engaged among themselves, and which, to a great extent, grew out of the invasions, still farther reduced their numbers.

The towns were surrounded with walls of earth and palisades, and had towers of defense. Entrenchments and

ditches were also found in various parts of the country. The most remarkable of the latter was at Pascha, west of the Mississippi. Here a large ditch, "wide enough for two canoes to pass abreast, without the paddles touching," surrounded a walled town. It was cut nine miles long, communicated with the Mississippi, supplied the natives with fish, and afforded them the privileges of navigation.

The natives formed artificial mounds for purposes of burial, worship, habitation and defense. The houses of the chiefs, with but few exceptions, stood upon large and elevated artificial mounds. When the Indians of 1540 resolved to build a town, the site of which was usually selected upon low rich land, by the side of some stream, or in the neighborhood of a large never-failing spring, they first erected a mound from twenty to fifty feet high, round on the sides but flat on the top. The habitations of the chief and his family were erected upon the summit. At the foot of the eminence a square was marked out around which the principal men placed their houses, and around them the inferior classes erected their wigwams. Some of these mounds had stairways upon their sides, and were so steep as to be accessible only by the artificial way. They were thus rendered secure from the attacks of an Indian enemy. Mounds were also erected over the chiefs after their death, whilst others were formed by the slow accumulation of the dead through ages.

The aborigines, at the time of De Soto, worshipped the sun, and erected large temples, which were also receptacles of the bones of the dead. The natives worshipped the sun, and entertained great veneration for the moon and certain stars. When the Indian ambassadors crossed the Savannah to meet De Soto, they made three profound bows toward the East, intended for the sun; three toward the West for the moon, and three toward De Soto. Upon the eastern bank of the Mississippi all the Indians approached him without uttering a word, and went through precisely the same ceremony, making to De Soto, however, three bows much

less reverential than those made to the sun and moon. Similar customs prevailed on the west bank of this great river. In the morning every Indian presented himself at the entrance of his cabin, and extending his hands toward the sun, as his first ray beamed from the eastern horizon, addressed a rude but fervent hymn of adoration to his glory. At noon they performed a similar act in token of their gratitude; and to the setting sun they addressed their thanks for all the bounties they conceived he had bestowed upon them during the day; and they were particularly careful that his last ray should strike their heads.

A remarkable temple was situated in the town of Talmaco, upon the Savannah River, three miles distant from Cutifachique, near Silver Bluff. It was more than one hundred feet in length, and fifty feet in width. The walls were high in proportion, and the roof steep and covered with mats of split cane, interwoven so compactly that they resembled the rush carpeting of the Moors. The roof was covered with shells of various kinds, arranged in an ingenious manner. On the inside beautiful festoons of pearls, plumes and shells extended along the sides down to the floor. The temple was entered by three gates, guarded by gigantic wooden statues, some of which were armed with drawn bows and long pikes, and others with copper hatchets. On the sides of the walls were large benches, in which sat boxes containing the deceased chiefs and their families. Three rows of chests full of valuable pearls occupied the middle of the temple. The temple abounded with beautiful garments manufactured out of the skins of various animals, and in the most splendid mantles of feathers.

Upon the route through Alabama and the neighboring States, De Soto found the temples full of human bones. The large towns contained stone houses, filled with rich and comfortable clothing, such as mantles of hemp, and feathers of every color exquisitely arranged. The dress of the men consisted of a mantle of the size of a common blanket, made

of the various barks of trees, and a species of flax interwoven and dyed of various colors; also, well dressed and painted skins, and garments worn with beautiful feathers. The mantle was thrown over the shoulders with the arm exposed. Great men were sometimes, after the manner of the Mexicans, borne upon litters by their subjects, while their heads were shielded from the sun by shades made of feathers or gaudily painted hides.

The important conclusion which we draw from these investigations is: That the race which erected the mounds and fortifications of Tennessee was existing and active at the time of the discovery of North America, and possessed the country with a numerous population, even as late as the exploration of De Soto. This conclusion, which is at variance with the theories propounded by various ethnologists of Europe and America, who assign a considerable period to the extinction of the mound builders, will be still farther sustained by the remarkable discovery which we have made during the progress of these investigations, of the cross, emblems of the Christian religion, and especially of the Trinity, the Saviour and the Virgin Mary in the mounds of Tennessee. We believe that the preceding conclusion is based upon incontrovertible facts and evidence.

We will proceed to consider, in the next place, the mode of burial practiced by the aborigines of Tennessee, as shown by their sacred and sacrificial mounds and stone graves.

The ancient race of Tennessee buried their dead in rude stone coffins or sarcophagi, constructed of flat pieces of limestone or slaty sandstone, which abounds in Middle Tennessee. Extensive graveyards are found in Tennessee and Kentucky along the river courses, in the valleys and around the springs, in which the stone coffins lie close to each other. These graves, although justly regarded as rude fabrics, nevertheless exhibit considerable skill in their construction, and are standing memorials of the regard in which the ancient race held the memory of the dead.

The manner of burial appeared to have been thus: An excavation of the proper size, according to that of the body of the dead, was made in the ground, and the bottom carefully paved with flat stones. Long flat stones, or slabs of limestone and slaty sandstone, were placed along the sides, and at the head and foot of the grave. The body or skeleton was then placed within the rude coffin, and the top covered with a large flat rock, or with several flat rocks. When a number of coffins were constructed together, the side rocks of the first coffin frequently constituted the side of the second, and so on. Many of the graves are quite small, only capable of containing the body of a new-born infant. Many of the short square graves, not more than eighteen inches, or two feet in length, contain the bones of adults piled together, the head being surrounded by, or resting upon the arm and leg bones. This class of graves, containing the bones of adults packed in a small space, was probably constructed at the general burying festival, or contained the remains of the dead which had been transported from a great distance.

In a small mound, about forty-five feet in diameter, and about twelve feet in height, which I opened, about ten miles from Nashville, on the banks of a small stream and spring, and which contained perhaps one hundred skeletons, the stone graves, especially towards the centre of the mound, were placed one upon the other, forming in the highest part of the mound three or four ranges. The oldest and lowest graves were of the small square variety, while those near or upon the summit, were of the natural length and width of the skeleton within.

In this mound, as in other burial places, in the small square stone graves, the bones were frequently found broken, and while some graves contained only a portion of an entire skeleton, others contained fragments of two or more skeletons mingled together. The small mound now under consideration, which was one of the most perfect in its construc-

tion, the lids of the upper sarcophagi being so arranged as to form an even-rounded, shelving rock surface, was situated upon the western slope of a beautiful hill covered with the magnificent growth of the native forest. The remains of an old Indian fortification were still evident, surrounding an extensive encampment and several other mounds. In a large and carefully constructed stone tomb, the lid of which was formed of a flat rock, over seven feet in length, and three feet wide, I exhumed the bones of what was supposed to have been an ancient Indian chief who had passed his hundred summers. The skeleton was about seven feet in length, and the huge jaws had lost every vestige of teeth, the alveolar processes being entirely absorbed.

The hill upon which the residence of Col. Overton stands, about nine miles from Nashville, was in ancient times covered with a flourishing Indian village. The circular depressions of their wigwams are still visible. The aborigines appeared to have been attracted to this locality by the noble spring which bursts out at the foot of the hill. Thousands of bones were exhumed in excavating the cellar of the family mansion. The crest and south-eastern slope of the hill are covered with stone graves, many of which have been opened by curiosity hunters. A large number are concealed by the rank growth of weeds and grass. Those which I examined at this locality were all constructed upon the same plan. Here, as elsewhere, the graves were of various sizes, from that just sufficient to enclose the remains of a little child, up to the long stone coffin of eight feet. Some have supposed that these little graves enclosed a race of pigmies, but upon careful examination of many, at various localities, we discovered that they were simply the graves of the young; for we found the teeth in all stages of development, from the toothless child, through the period of dentition, up to the appearance of the wisdom teeth. Some of the small graves contained the bones of small animals, apparently of dogs, rabbits, squirrels and wild cats, and of birds, such as the wild

turkey. These animals were buried with the children. Some of the burial mounds were evidently used also for sacred and religious purposes, and were held in high veneration as the resting place of royal families. Thus, in a small mound which I explored, about one hundred feet in diameter and about ten feet high, on the eastern bank of the Cumberland River, opposite the city of Nashville, and just across from the mouth of Lick Branch, at the foot of a large mound, which had been apparently used as a residence, I discovered the following interesting remains :

In the centre of the mound, about three feet from its surface, I uncovered a large sacrificial vase, or altar, forty-three inches in diameter, composed of a mixture of clay and river shells. The rim of the vase was three inches in height. The entire vessel had been moulded in a large wicker basket, formed of split canes, and the leaves of the cane, the impressions of which were plainly visible upon the outer surface. The circle of the vase appeared to be almost mathematically correct. The surface of the altar was covered with a layer of ashes, about one inch in thickness, and these ashes had the appearance and composition of having been derived from the burning of animal matter. The antlers and jaw bone of a deer were found resting upon the surface of the altar. The edges of the vase, which had been broken off, apparently by accident during the performances of the religious ceremonies, were carefully laid over the layer of ashes, and the whole covered with earth near three feet in thickness, and thus the ashes have been preserved to a remarkable extent from the action of the rains.

Stone sarcophagi were ranged around the central altar with the heads of the dead to the centre, and the feet to the circumference, resembling the radii of a circle. The inner circle of graves was constructed with great care, and all the Indians buried around the altar were ornamented with beads of various kinds, some of which had been cut out of large sea-shells, others out of bone, and others again, were com-

posed of an entire sea-shell, punctured, so as to admit of the passage of the thread upon which they were strung.

In a most carefully constructed stone sarcophagus with the face looking to the setting sun, a beautiful shell ornament was found resting upon the breast bone. It had a central sun, and the large circle around this curiously divided into three figures or equal parts, with two outer rows of suns (nine suns in the outer row, making twenty-three suns in these two rows), making with the central sun, twenty-four suns in all; and with stars encircling the suns. This ornament upon its concave figured surface, had been covered with red paint; upon the back the convex plane surface was smooth and plain, with the exception of three crescentic marks.

The material of which it is composed was derived from a large flat sea-shell; no fresh water muscle, in any part of the waters of Tennessee and of the surrounding States, could furnish a uniform thickness of flat shell equal to this; and the regularity of its convexity and concavity, as well as the perfection of all its parts, and the uniformity of its thickness everywhere, are proofs that it must have been derived from a very large shell from the sea coast. This skeleton had around the neck, arms, waist and ankles, numerous beads of various kinds. The smaller beads were all of the small sea-shells. This stone grave had been constructed with such care, that little or no earth had fallen in and the skeleton rested as it were in a perfect vault. The head, which was evidently that of a woman, was in a remarkable state of preservation.

From the nature of the ornament upon the breast, as well as from the care with which the sarcophagus had been constructed, we judged that this was the priestess of the sun. In the grave of a child, near the right side of the grave of the priestess of the sun, and at the foot of the grave of a gigantic old Indian, seven feet in length, and of great age, as manifested by the loss of teeth, and the absorption of the alveoli, a curious small black idol was exhumed. The fea-

tures of this image resemble those of the Aztec, or ancient Mexican sculptures. The figure is kneeling, with the hands clasped across the breasts (forming a cross) in the attitude of prayer. This image is formed of a mixture of black clay and powdered shells, and is exceedingly hard, with a smooth, polished surface. The under jaw of the old Indian, whose grave lay near this idol, was of remarkable size, and had only one long, sharp fang, like the tooth of a wild animal. On the left of the grave of the priestess of the sun lay two other most carefully constructed graves, in one of which numerous beads were found, enclosing or encircling various portions of the skeleton, and in the other a large sea conch. Also two copper ornaments, lying on the side of the head of the skeleton, or rather two round pieces of wood, with a hole in the centre, and covered with a thin layer of copper. Two skeletons, apparently those of a man and woman, were found on the southern slope of the mound near the altar, which had been interred without any stone coffin. In the hand of the woman was a beautiful, light reddish yellow vase, painted with regular black figures. Under the head of the male skeleton lay a splendid stone hatchet with the entire handle and ring, at the end of the handle, cut out of a compact green chloritic primitive stone. A circle of graves extended around the inner circle, which we have described as radiating from the altar. The stone coffins of the outer circle lay at right angles to the inner circle, and rested as it were at the feet of the more highly honored and favored dead. In the outer graves no ornaments were found—only a few small arrow heads and fragments of shells and pots. After careful examination, we were forced to the conclusion that this sacred mound was formed at the time of the death of some celebrated chief or chieftess, the representative of the sun; and the more distinguished members of the family were buried in the inner circle around the altar, where the eternal fire was kept, and the more humble relatives and attendants around at their feet. It is probable that this sacred

mound marked the site of an ancient temple of the sun, in which the aborigines kept the eternal fire. The sacrifices upon the altar appear, from the bones of the deer, the antlers, etc., to have been not human, but animal.

That the aborigines of Tennessee were idolaters, is manifest from the stone and clay idols, which have been found in various portions of the State, some of which were found in caves, and others upon the summit of high mounds.

It is worthy of notice that some of the idols have the forehead flattened, making an exact line with the nose, and resembling in all respects the Toltec heads of Mexico, while others are represented with full round foreheads; and it is still further worthy of notice that the hair of the head of the idols is represented in a very different mode from that in which the nomadic tribes of North American Indians now wear it. In the female idols the hair is gathered into a knot or "waterfall" behind, while in the male idols it is bound into a cue behind, like the hair of the Chinese. These remarkable sculptures in hard sandstone, limestone and porphyry, correspond in features and mode of hair dress with the inhabitants of Central America, at the time of the Spanish conquest.

Herera, in describing the inhabitants of Yucatan, says: "They flatten their heads and foreheads, their ears were bored, with rings in them, their hair was long like women, and in tresses, with which they made a garland about the head, and a little tail hung behind."

The most important and interesting result in the entire series of investigations is the discovery of undoubted symbols of the Catholic religion in the stone graves and mounds of Tennessee. In a stone grave in a small mound within an extensive fortification on the banks of Big Harpeth River, two and a half miles from Franklin, on the plantation of General DeGraffenried, four copper crosses were exhumed, resting upon the skull of an old Indian. The copper had stained the bones of the cranium of a deep green color. In

their general outlines two of these crosses presented the general contour of the human figure. The crosses appear to have been stamped upon the copper plates with a die.

This grave also contained a remarkable vase, fashioned of a light yellow clay and crushed river shells, upon the sides of which were painted in black, three crosses, surrounded with three circles and three crowns. The rounded body of the vase was accurately divided into three portions, by the black pigment disposed in three black bands, uniting at the base and neck of the vase, thus leaving three circular spaces, upon the rounded sides, which were ornamented with the central cross, an outer circle around each cross, while this circle was again surmounted by the crown. Each crown had ten prominences or points. The superior portion of the neck of the vase was arched and so turned as to form the mouth horizontally. The summit of the vase terminated in a well shaped nipple.

In a similar burial mound within the same enclosure, amongst other most interesting relics, we discovered two large vases, marked in a similar manner, with three divisions, three central crosses, three circles around the crosses, and three crowns. In these large vases the points of the crowns were drawn out so as to resemble spikes and thorns, and in one of the vases the ends of the thorns, or those portions which would form the circle of the crown are represented as if plaited together. Two vases of similar construction were also exhumed, one with the head of a Spaniard, with a helmet upon the crown. The resemblance of the features to those of a Spanish Cavalier is wonderful. This small vessel was used as a paint bowl, and still contains the red ochre. The other black vase is fastened on the summit after the manner of a hood. Another small idol fashioned of white clay, found in Middle Tennessee, painted with the same black pigment, and dressed in what appears to represent a woven garment, has the sign of the cross upon both shoulders. The idol found in the sacred mound, as we have before

said, has the arms crossed upon the breast, in the attitude of prayer, the crown upon the head has three prominences, and the hatchet has three marks upon its head, and the beautiful shell ornament from the same mound has the symbol of the Trinity, both upon the anterior and posterior surfaces.

A circular shell ornament, with a well formed crown in the centre, which had been filled with some kind of red pigment, was discovered by Colonel Putnam in a stone grave near Nashville.

These religious relics are of a great interest in their bearing upon the probable date of the mounds and temples and graves in which they are found, and in the proof which they afford, that the inhabitants of America, have, at various times, come in contact with the civilization and religions of Europe, even before the recognized era of the discovery and exploration of the American continent.

In several of the crania, the os-Incae, characteristic of the Peruvian skulls, was observed. That this ancient race were descended from the Toltecs, and were probably a branch of the Natchez, is rendered probable, not only from the conformation of the crania, but also from the history of this once powerful, but now extinct nation of the Natchez.

THE FAUNA OF MONTANA TERRITORY.

BY J. G. COOPER, M. D.

(Continued from page 35.)

CAT BIRD (*Mimus Carolinensis*). I was surprised to find the Cat Bird common entirely across the Rocky Mountains to Cœur d'Aléne Mission, almost on the border of the Columbia Plains. It has the usual cry and habits of the species. I thought I saw *Oreoscoptes montanus* along the Hell Gate River, but may have been mistaken.

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). I observed this bird